

## Crying For Help

*Country crooning paralegal finds therapy through music*

Christy Bowles takes her work home with her. She also brings her experiences at home to work. "It started in my childhood," Bowles confides. "I had an abusive stepfather and watched my mom go through that, and watched my sisters and the things that we had to go through."

A mild-mannered legal services paralegal by day and smoldering country singer by night, Bowles has drawn inspiration from the many survivors of domestic violence she has helped during her day job at the Legal



Aid Society of Roanoke Valley. Bowles' own experiences growing up in a violent home prompted her to pursue a career in legal aid.

One night, as she sat on her bed with her pen and notebook, she thought of all those tear-filled nights of the past. And she started to write. So began the process that produced "For Crying Out Loud," a song that rocketed into the Top 10 of the Christian Country charts after being recorded by country singer Jeanie Kay Truesdale. "I wrote it from my heart and my own experience," Bowles says. "Having been there, and having met other people who have been there, gives it more power. They hear those words and think, 'I've

thought that before. I've felt that before.'"

Once Bowles finished the lyrics, she made a rough homemade recording by singing into a tape recorder. Bob Hamm, a music producer and publisher in Nashville, Tenn., commissioned a demo and pitched the song to Truesdale, for whom the song also resonated. "I really felt a lot of sadness for the victims," Truesdale says. "My sister was a victim of very physical domestic violence, and I was actually in a very verbal domestic violence marriage at one point." What made the biggest impression, she says, was the song's positive ending, where the victim chooses to leave her abuser. Truesdale immediately called Hamm, telling him of her intention to record the song.

Following its release in April 2004, "For Crying Out Loud" made the Christian Country charts in only four days. The song garnered Truesdale a nomination for Female Vocalist of the Year by the Christian Country Music Association. According to Hamm, the song has become an anthem for hundreds of domestic violence organizations in the South.

While Truesdale has performed the song at countless churches and candlelight vigils—she's already booked solid for October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month—Bowles continues to sing it in bars and clubs with her band, Point Blank. Each performance brings a new audience, and many listeners approach Bowles and share their own stories of domestic violence. "I actually carry my legal aid cards with me everywhere I go," Bowles says. "I'll give them a card and say, 'If you can't find the resources you need, call



**ABOVE:** Christy Bowles is a legal services paralegal by day and a country singer by night. Her work helping domestic violence victims inspired her to compose "For Crying Out Loud," a song about spousal battery and mustering the courage to escape it. **LEFT:** Christian country singer Jeanie Kay Truesdale recorded Bowles' song, which became an instant Top 10 hit in its genre.

me and I'll see if I can find them for you."

Bowles hopes to one day record "For Crying Out Loud" herself, but for now she's satisfied performing in night spots across Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, where her band has opened for well-known country acts like Tim McGraw and Diamond Rio. While proud of her song's impact on violence victims, Bowles cannot deny the therapeutic effect it has had on her own life.

"It's kind of a process for me, too, because I'm still healing from the things I've seen," she says. "When my mom comes out to see me perform, she's standing right there in front of me, crying her eyes out." —J.H.

## LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

### Hillary Highlights Centennial Gala

Founder and director of a major university's law clinic... Board member and Chair of the Legal Services Corporation... First Lady of Arkansas... First Lady of the United States... United States Senator from the State of New York.

Big occasions deserve big speakers, and the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland landed one of the biggest stars in the political universe for its 100th Anniversary gala celebration. Hillary Rodham Clinton will deliver keynote remarks April 30 at the Cleveland Convention Center, where some 1,000

legal aid supporters from across Northeast Ohio will gather to mark the program's centennial. Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, the fifth-oldest organization of its kind in the nation, specializes in helping low-income Ohioans with housing, employment, family law, immigration, consumer issues, special education, and community development matters.

Senator Clinton has deep roots in legal aid, dating back to law school in New Haven, Conn., and to her first job as a law professor and clinical director at University of Arkansas School of Law.



PETER QUITS

**Joe Williams:** The Tennessee Bar Association awarded Vanderbilt University law student Joe Williams its 2004-2005 Law Student Volunteer of the Year Award. Williams received the award for his unpaid stint at the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland, where he "performed his tasks with intellectual vigor and personal kindness," according to colleagues at the program. One noteworthy case he handled involved a man who was denied his SSI benefits because he was erroneously classified as a "fleeing felon." Williams succeeded in getting his client's benefits reinstated and also helped clarify the statute to prevent future misinterpretations.



**Ryan L. Everhart:** New York's Erie County Volunteer Lawyers Project awarded Everhart, an attorney with Hodgson Russ LLP, its Guardianship Volunteer Award for developing a project that helps clients secure guardianship rights to care for family members with developmental disabilities once they reach the age of 18.



**Memphis Access to Justice Committee:** In a 2004 report by the American Bar Association and the National Conference of Bar Presidents, the year-old Memphis Access to Justice Committee was recognized as one of the "Best Projects of 2004." The committee, chaired by Andy Branham, pictured, is the result of a collaborative effort by Memphis Area Legal Services, the Community Legal Center, and the Memphis and Tennessee Bar Associations to increase pro bono work, expand access to the courts, and educate the Bar and the public about justice issues.



**Andy Wood:** The Richmond (Va.) Bar Association honored Wood with its John C. Kenny Pro Bono Award for his work providing pro bono representation to clients of the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society. Described by his colleagues as having a "heart of gold," Wood says pro bono service is an indispensable part of his legal career. "It's like going to church," he says.



## For Jolie, Hero Role Is No Act

When Angelina Jolie isn't gallivanting around ancient ruins taking out evil villains in the popular *Tomb Raider* movies, she is a real-life hero to refugee children badly in need of one. The Hollywood star recently spoke at a National



"All we're asking is for someone to just hold their hands through this very scary time," the actress says.

Jolie helped bankroll the Center's launch with a personal contribution of \$500,000. The Center's core mission is to recruit and

train lawyers to represent minors in immigration cases. Many of the children in such cases initially enter the United States to escape political violence, domestic abuse, human trafficking, and other tragedies perpetrated in their native lands. The Center is the result of a collaborative effort by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants and the American Immigration Lawyers Association. The Center is slated to open this spring.

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LEFT: Rep. John Lewis helped LSC commemorate Black History Month by sharing stories from the civil rights movement. RIGHT: LSC attorney Charles Crittenden greets the Congressman, who took time to autograph copies of his memoir, "Walking With the Wind."

## Civil Rights Struggle Remembered

United States Congressman John Lewis (D-GA) visited LSC's headquarters in February to deliver an impassioned speech marking the celebration of Black History Month. Born to sharecropper parents in Alabama, Lewis went on to become one of the most prominent leaders of the U.S. civil rights movement. As a young man, Lewis marched on Washington with the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., helped organize the Freedom Rides to desegregate southern buses, and led protests for a seat at the table of segregated

lunch counters. Rep. Lewis is currently in his 10th term in Congress, representing Georgia's 5th district. He captivated the assembled LSC staff during his presentation, using his rhythmic Southern-preacher elocution to hold forth on subjects ranging from chicken farming in Dixie to surviving assaults for participating in what were supposed to be non-violent civil rights protests in the South. The speech by Rep. Lewis capped LSC's month-long observance of Black History Month.

NPJ PHOTO BY JOHN MELETSKY

PETER CUTTS PHOTOS



## A Mile Per Man

Some people tie yellow ribbons around trees in times of war. Some buy magnetic yellow ribbons to proudly display on their cars.

Karl Rysted wears them...on his hat, his body, wherever they will fit. The 43-year-old staff attorney with Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma began his yellow ribbon campaign by committing to run one mile for each American soldier killed in Iraq until the last troop is safely home. For every hundred miles, Rysted puts on another ribbon.

He has run those miles by competing in the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon, the Marine Corps Marathon, the Baltimore Marathon, and most recently, the Freescale Austin Marathon in February. After logging 775 miles, he had only 25 miles to go for yellow ribbon number eight.

Military service runs in the Rysted family—both Karl's father and father-in-law served during the Korean War, and his sister-in-law just finished a stint in the Oklahoma National Guard. "It's a very satisfying feeling," Rysted says of his unique way of honoring the troops' sacrifice. "It's just the same expression of support that a lot of people are feeling out there."



Karl Rysted, an attorney with Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, crosses the finish line of a marathon as part of his commitment to run one mile for every American soldier killed in Iraq.

## New Kind of Collection Plate

In Florida, money to support legal aid doesn't grow on palm trees, and neither do Texas' vast farms reap a special bumper crop of equal justice resources. Yet in both states, legal services funding recently has started sprouting from an equally unlikely source: customized license plates. Those wishing to make a rear-bumper statement can now voice support for equal access to justice on their specialized plates while making a donation to each state's cash-strapped legal aid programs. In the Lone Star State, the Texas Young Lawyers Association designed a plate



emblazoned with the statement "And Justice For All." Every plate sold sends \$22 to the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation (TEAJF), which distributes the funds statewide. "Something that generates \$24,000

a year and requires no effort is an incredible thing for legal aid," points out Betty Torres, TEAJF's executive director. Not to be outdone, the Florida Bar Foundation hopes its colorful plate showcasing chil-

dren swinging on the scales of justice accompanied by the message, "Kids Deserve Justice," will raise \$1 million a year for groups that represent children.

### LSC By The Numbers

**\$363.8** Amount, in millions, that LSC is requesting from Congress for FY 2006

**\$5** Amount, in millions, that LSC requested for its Technology Initiative Grant program in FY 2006

**\$330.8** Amount, in millions, that LSC received from Congress in FY 2005

**93** Percentage of LSC's FY 2006 budget request that would go directly to programs to assist needy clients

**901,067** Number of cases closed by LSC grantees in 2004

## D.C. Convenes 'Action Commission'

On the heels of a District of Columbia Bar Foundation report on the scant availability of civil legal services in the nation's capital, Chief Judge Annice M. Wagner of the D.C. Court of Appeals established the District of Columbia Access to Justice Commission. The Commission will address the report's findings that only 10 percent of D.C. residents living in poverty have access to civil legal services.

"Equal access to justice is a fundamental principle in America. In spite of the continuing efforts of many in our legal community, we still have to work to make that principle a full reality



D.C. Court of Appeals Chief Judge Annice M. Wagner

in the District," Wagner says. "We have to do more, and the Commission will lay out a path to get us there."

The 17-member commission will be made up of judges, leaders from the D.C. Bar and D.C. Bar Foundation, legal services attorneys, and other advocates. It will be chaired by Peter B. Edelman, a law professor at Georgetown University who has advocated on behalf of the poor throughout his career. "This is an action commission," he says. "We are not simply going to make recommendations. We are going to make things happen."

## Disability Rights Trailblazer Passes

On Dec. 5, 2004, the equal justice community mourned the passing of Elaine Wilson, 53, the courageous plaintiff whose victory in the landmark 1999 disability rights case of *L.C. and E.W. v. Olmstead*

improved the lives of thousands of disabled Americans.

Represented by the Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Wilson and her co-plaintiffs successfully argued before the Supreme Court that the Americans With Disabilities Act should be interpreted to allow people

with disabilities to live in the most integrated community setting possible.

Wilson was denied that opportunity during a 15-year period in which she was institutionalized 35 separate times with mental disabilities. Her victory in the *Olmstead* case ensures that others living with disabilities will be afforded the maximum opportunity to lead comfortable, autonomous lives. Unlike many institutional settings, integrated community facilities provide opportunities for the disabled to make friends, hold jobs,

stay active in the local community, and leave their homes to shop and socialize.

Wilson remained a strong voice for the disabled in the years following the *Olmstead* ruling. She was said to be troubled by the

slow pace at which the Supreme Court's ruling was being implemented around the country, particularly in her home state of Georgia. According to a 2002 University of Colorado report charting states' progress in moving qualified disabled patients from institutions into integrated communities, Georgia

ranked near the bottom. Sue Jamieson, the Atlanta Legal Aid Society staff attorney who represented Wilson in the *Olmstead* case, said of her late client: "Elaine was exceptional because she survived so many years in an institution and was able to turn around and be the person she probably would have been if she had never been put there in the first place. The only difference between Elaine and other people in institutions is that she was given a chance—the same chance she fought to give other people like her."



L to R: Sue Jamieson, staff attorney with Atlanta Legal Aid; Elaine Wilson; Lois Curtis, co-plaintiff in the *Olmstead* case

**"The only difference between Elaine and other people in institutions is that she was given a chance." —Sue Jamieson, Atlanta Legal Aid Society**

## TRANSITIONS

■ **RETIRED:** C. Lyonel Jones as executive director of the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland. A 37-year career spent in service to low-income Ohioans will soon draw to a close as Jones prepares to step down upon the naming of his successor later this year. Jones also served as President of the National Legal Aid & Defender Association's (NLADA)

Board of Directors from 1979 to 1982 and was the first African American and first advocate from a field program to hold that position.

■ **RETIRED:** Clint Lyons as President of the National Legal Aid & Defender Association. On June 30, Lyons will step down as NLADA

President after 21 years leading the organization. In his new role, he will serve as Chairman and CEO of the NLADA Insurance Program. Lyons, who has worked in legal services for more than 33 years, says he is proud

of his role in helping the NLADA become a "powerful force for equal justice in America." However, he warns that there are still "miles to go before we realize our mission of making real the promise of equal justice in the daily lives of ordinary people." Jo-Ann Wallace, NLADA's current senior vice president for programs, has been chosen as Lyons' successor. ■ **RETIRED:** Dennis E. Bricking as

Executive Director of Kentucky's Legal Aid Society (LAS). When Bricking stepped down as head of the program on December 31, 2004, it marked the end of his 36-year career at LAS working on behalf of poor and underprivileged Kentuckians. He was the program's director for 29 of those 36 years.

■ **HIRED:** Jeffrey A. Been as new Executive

Director of Kentucky's Legal Aid Society. Been, who has been with the program since 1992, was promoted from associate director to the top job. "When I chose to work at legal aid, it was to make a difference for others," Been says. "I know my dedicated colleagues did it for the same reason. We will move Legal Aid forward with vigor for our work and with commitment to our clients."

■ **HIRED:** Mauricio Vivero as Executive Director of Ayuda, a legal and social services organization that defends the legal and human rights of low-income Latino and other immigrant communities in the Washington, D.C., area. Vivero served as Legal Services Corporation's Vice President for Governmental Relations and Public Affairs from 1998 to 2003.





## LSC's 30th Anniversary ■ WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

A 30th birthday is a time for reflection, a chance to ponder past accomplishments and plot a course for the future. It's a tradition that applies both to people and to the most important institutions we create. The Legal Services Corporation celebrated 30 years of providing access to civil justice this winter, prompting our judicial, political, and legal leaders to reflect on LSC's continuing contributions to American society:



"A responsible and compassionate society protects its most vulnerable citizens. For three decades, LSC has helped fund legal assistance for low-income individuals in need. Through your programs, your organization has contributed to a fair and effective judicial system and advanced the ideals that make our country strong. I applaud your commitment to upholding the principles of opportunity and equal justice for all. Your efforts help make our country a more hopeful place."—President George W. Bush



"As we celebrate the 30th anniversary, I am heartened that there are enough lawmakers, Republicans and Democrats, who now understand the need for legal services and all the things that you do as you give aid to individuals and families. I share your upbeat assessment about LSC's history—and its future."  
—United States Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM)



"Thirty undeniably is a big birthday and 30 years of stemming the tides undeniably is a solid achievement. . . . I've come to think of the initials LSC as standing for 'Leveraging Scarce Capital,' and over the last three decades we've certainly seen a number of cooperative efforts to leverage scarce capital—dollar capital as well as human capital."

—Judith S. Kaye, Chief Judge of the State of New York



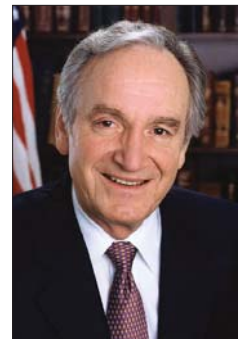
"Equal justice under law. We are all familiar with this phrase. Essentially, it holds that justice, as an inalienable right, should never be determined by financial well-being or station in life. Of course, simply declaring this founding tenet of our democracy does not make it a reality. LSC stands at the forefront of this cause by providing thousands of small, everyday victories that, while never mentioned on the evening news, have a profound effect on the lives of so many."—Robert J. Grey, ABA President

## Harkin Inducted Into Hall of Fame

Corn and soybeans aren't the only things Iowa produces. The Hawkeye State also cultivates a harvest of legal aid heroes—so many, that Iowa has its own Hall of Fame to commemorate them.

Three contributors to the cause of equal justice, including former legal services attorney Senator Tom

Harkin, were inducted into the Iowa Legal Aid Hall of Fame on March 8. More than 300 people honored the careers of Harkin and attorneys Naomi



Mercer and Robert N. Downer at the second-annual "Equal Justice After Hours: A Tribute to Friends of Iowa Legal Aid," which also capped a successful fundraising campaign that raised \$360,000.

Accepting his award via videotape, Harkin remembered his tenure at Iowa Legal Aid as one of the most formative periods of his life. When LSC was faced with the prospect of elimination by Congress in the mid-1990s, Senator Harkin played a critical role in helping to win bipartisan support and subsequent funding increases. Harkin also sponsored an amendment in 2003 that led to a \$9.5 million funding increase for LSC.

Both Mercer and Downer were accorded standing ovations upon accepting their awards. Mercer, one of the founders of the Legal Services Corporation of Iowa in 1977, went on to become a notable civil rights advocate. Downer, while President of the Iowa Bar Association, devoted much of his time to spotlighting the need for legal services programs, including leading the drive to obtain state funding in 1996.

Others were recognized for providing pro bono services to low-income clients, including the Polk County Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Project, the Scott County Pro Bono Project, and the Iowa Legal Aid Volunteer Lawyers Project.